

State Commission

Created in 1994, Serve Washington advances national service, volunteerism, and civic engagement to improve lives; expands opportunity to meet the local critical needs of residents of Washington; and strengthens community capacity while creating healthy and resilient communities. Six staff provide administrative oversight for \$14.4 million in federal AmeriCorps program funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Commission supports 15 AmeriCorps programs that engage more than 1,300 AmeriCorps members in service to address needs in the areas of disaster services; economic opportunity; education; environmental stewardship; healthy futures; and veterans and military families. Through capacity building activities, Serve Washington ensures that all AmeriCorps subgrantees are effective and fully comply with applicable regulations enabling them to operate impactful programs that provide high quality service experiences for AmeriCorps members. Typical activities include subgrantee training and technical assistance, subgrantee program and fiscal monitoring, and hosting the Leadership Forum for National Service Executives.

AmeriCorps State

The Washington Service Corps, housed in the Washington State Employment Security Department, has 570 AmeriCorps members serving throughout the state, including in rural, underserved areas with limited capacity and resources. In the past year, the AmeriCorps members trained nearly 40,000 people on personal disaster preparedness; and more than 39,000 said they had greater knowledge and awareness to respond to a disaster. Members taught academic support programs to 6,302 students. Of these students, 75 percent improved by at least one benchmark. Members also trained more than 30,000 people on energy efficiency and environmentally conscious practices and more than 15,000 people on health issues. They engaged 871 veterans in volunteer projects and days of service and 66 percent of the veterans plan to return for additional volunteer opportunities. America's Service Commissions recognized the Washington Service Corps as the 2015 Outstanding Service Program.

The Washington Conservation Corps engages 316 AmeriCorps members protect and restore the environment. AmeriCorps members, who are young adults ages 18-25 and military veterans, serve in field crews and in individual positions. The Corps also operates an AmeriCorps disaster response team which responds to local and national disasters. It is housed in the Department of Ecology and coordinates with the Departments of Natural Resources, Veteran Affairs, Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks for additional resources and funding. It partners with more than 50 local and federal organizations to accomplish environmental projects throughout the state. In the past year, AmeriCorps members treated 3,170 acres of public and tribal land. They planted native trees and shrubs, removed invasive species, and created or improved trails. They also responded to major disasters, including local flash flooding, local wildfires, and the federally-declared disaster area of Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, after a destructive typhoon hit the island.

AmeriCorps National

City Year Seattle/King County AmeriCorps engages 84 members who serve full-time at 10 schools, helping more than 4,500 students at greatest risk of dropping out. AmeriCorps members serve alongside teachers, using research-based tools to improve students' attendance, behavior, and performance in math and English. The members also lead afterschool programs and school-wide initiatives to improve school culture. Thanks to the members' service, 74 percent of students in grades 3 through 5 who had support from the City Year AmeriCorps members improved their literacy scores, and 36 percent improved a whole grade level or more. Additionally, 86 percent of students in grades 3 through 5 who tutored by members improved their score on standardized math tests; 40 percent improved a grade level or more.

In the Spokane community, where poverty rate of males is nearly double that of the rest of the state, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest AmeriCorps member Thomas served in the Childbirth and Parenting Assistance Program of Catholic Charities Spokane. He provided social support, counseling, and educational services to low-income families with children under five years old. He and his supervisor created a Fatherhood Parenting Class, a four-week course with a research-based curriculum to help fathers learn parenting skills and tips about family discipline, health, safety, and empathy. They developed the class to meet Spokane's growing need for parenting programs that focus on the needs of fathers and their unique strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Thanks to this curriculum, the ten fathers who took the class have better parenting knowledge, have shown an interest in several other Childbirth and Parenting Assistance services, and learned lifelong lessons that are helping their families.

Mt. Adams Institute VetsWork AmeriCorps members serve with public lands management and natural resource agencies to meet land improvement needs that would otherwise be unmet. AmeriCorps members maintain trails, clear non-native invasive species, maintain recreation areas, engage volunteers, do technical writing, and evaluate and document archeological sites. In Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, Conboy National Wildlife Refuge, and through Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, 14 VetsWork AmeriCorps members gave 14,796 hours of service. The members maintained 577 miles of trail, maintained and assessed 122 facilities, and cleared 771 acres of non-native invasive species. They marked 55 acres of timber, assessed 7,155 acres of range allotment, and built 17,250 feet of fencing. They taught 445 students for a total of 1075 hours of instruction, coordinated 345 volunteers who gave 3,693 hours of service and made 375 visitor contacts.

AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA member Courtney Catt hit the ground running in late August at Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center in Spokane. She has already restructured and reactivated an after school tutoring program at Grant Elementary School, complete with policies and procedures, methods of operation, and new university partnerships. Tutors are signed on and the program is soaring. In addition, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program at the center has already been able to measure increased literacy in 15 children and increased math/number literacy in 30 children due to Courtney's capacity building efforts.

Rebecca Craig, an AmeriCorps VISTA with Jewish Family Service of Seattle, is connecting highly-skilled refugee professionals with employment opportunities in their field. One of these professionals is Abdalnaser. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Iraq and 13 years' experience working for large international corporations. Since coming to America two and a half years ago, he has been unable to find a job in his field, and took a job as a maintenance technician at an apartment complex to support his family. Recently, Jewish Family Service and the City of Kent were able to provide Abdalnaser with an opportunity to gain experience in the field with the Community and Economic Development Department. Abdalnaser sat in on multiple engineering meetings and connected with engineering managers and senior level engineers. This included a civil engineer who is a refugee from Latin America whose story reminded Abdalnaser of his own. "We talked about many things, until almost 7pm when we looked around and it was us left in the office. It was great to meet someone who has been through what I have been through." Abdalnaser said, "I have been waiting for this opportunity for more than two years."

AmeriCorps NCCC

The mission of the Carlton Complex Long Term Recovery Group is to ensure that the diverse disaster recovery needs of the community are fully met following the historic wildfire and flooding of July 2014. The community lost more than 350 homes and more than 600 residents had direct personal property loss due to the fires and floods. To support their recovery efforts, the Project requested the service of an AmeriCorps NCCC team. The team's projects ranged from sorting clothes to working at disaster survivors' homes, but were all geared towards facilitating the recovery process of the community. The team often served alongside community members, and repaired a total of 13,182 feet of fencing. Some of the affected homes were still in the first stages in disaster recovery, which involves removing burned debris. The team removed 9,120 pounds of debris, completed one half acre of land restoration, and landscaped three additional acres of land. In an effort to clean up and reduce future fire fuel, the team burned one quarter-acre of land in prescribed burns and dug a trench for power lines at a burn site.

Camp Korey's mission is to honor the courage, strength, and determination of children and their families who battle life-threatening and serious illnesses, and to provide them with a safe, friendly, and medically-sound environment in which to simply have fun and be kids. The camp serves more than 3,000 children and family members annually, and is the only camp for children with craniofacial disorders, skeletal dysplasia, mitochondrial disease, and several other conditions in the Northwest United States. An AmeriCorps NCCC team was requested to support maintenance work of the camp grounds. While serving with Camp Korey, the team cleared 725 pounds of invasive species from 29 acres and maintained two miles of existing trails. The team harvested more than 1,200 pounds of produce, weeded 12 acres, and helped to make the garden wheelchair accessible. In addition to the garden work, Members painted four picnic tables, dug four garden beds, inventoried a warehouse, and participated in two camp programs by side-walking horses and helping coordinate fishing and boating for 60 campers.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

At Beacon Hill International School, Foster Grandparent Refugio Gutierrez serves in the first grade Spanish immersion classroom. When asked to describe her relationship with the children at the site, staff responded, "Refugio is very calm and pleasant and has a heart for the students. She is very helpful and the students love her." They go on to say that Ms. Gutierrez is "intuitive and takes the initiative to interact and assist the students." Refugio works with a child that struggles to stay on task. When the teacher does class instruction she is unable to dedicate the attention to help the student get back on track. Refugio stays close to the child and participates in the activity alongside him which helps redirect his attention. Refugio mentioned afterwards that this particular child often struggles to stay on task, and therefore she watches him to see when he needs additional support.

Senior Corps RSVP

RSVP of Spokane County is sponsored by the YMCA of the Inland Northwest. One of the programs coordinated by RSVP is the Reading Corps, an elementary tutoring program consisting of 11 volunteer tutors. In addition to regular tutoring services, the RSVP Reading Corps distributed more than 300 books to 100 students at Holmes Elementary School in Spokane with financial support from a grant from First Book. Holmes Elementary School has the highest percentage of low-income students in the area with 89 percent of the students receiving free and reduced price lunches. In addition to the books, 20 Project Warm-Up RSVP volunteers also provided each student with a hand-knitted hat for the winter. This is a true team effort to support students in Spokane.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Immigrant seniors living in the Seattle and surrounding Puget Sound area represent an array of different ethnic backgrounds ranging from Korean to Laotian. The Senior Companion Program of King and Snohomish County has been recruiting volunteers whose first language is not English for the past 25 years to assist these underserved, isolated, and disabled seniors. Erlinda Lorenzo is a Filipino volunteer who has been serving with the Senior Companion Program since 2010. Erlinda serves six Filipino clients, all of whom don't speak English. She assists them in signing up for local social services and taking the metro around Seattle. She is also a great companion and will cook authentic Filipino food for lunch and bring it with her on home visits. In 2014, Erlinda was recognized by Governor Jay Inslee for her exceptional volunteer service and went for a visit to the governor's mansion. One of Erlinda's clients described her this way, "Erlinda is very kind, caring and helpful. We laugh a lot together; I appreciate our bond over sharing the same background. She makes me feel less lonely overall."

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grant-making intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits serving low-income communities across America. The SIF programs in the state focus on a variety of areas including mental health, workforce development, affordable housing, and more. In the fall, Skill Up Washington and its employer partner provided training to 62 individuals who earned a total of 206 college credits. This represents significant growth from the previous fall when the employer partner offered two classes with just 13 individuals completing classes. Subgrantees of the John Hartford Foundation have provided nearly 800 beneficiaries with mental health services. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$355,000 and is expanding the impact of 10 nonprofits in Washington.

Volunteer Generation Fund

In Washington State, the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) is strengthening volunteer centers through planning and capacity building, enabling replication of successful programs and engagement models. Serve Washington, Volunteer Centers of Washington, and 501 Commons continue to expand statewide programs. Over the next three years, Washington State's Volunteer Generation Fund partners will focus on activities that support volunteerism as a strategy to support the educational success of students in our state. The activities will include support for STEM programs, reading initiatives, after-school programs, initiatives targeted to reduce disproportionality in educational outcomes, and preparation for post-secondary education. In 2014-15, the Volunteer Generation Fund supported organizations generated 13,189 volunteers who served 64,502 hours. The Washington Serves Plan, developed during the first year of the Volunteer Generation Fund, is being updated in 2016 to serve as a vision for sustaining an effective volunteer ecosystem that addresses the diverse needs of communities throughout Washington State.